

The Examiner has rejected 1-27 under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,212,178 (Beck, et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,295,551 (Roberts, et al.). In light of the amendments to the claims and the arguments made below the applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The applicant's invention as described in the claims is a communications system accessible over a data network, such as the Internet, which allows system users employing a personal computer and web-browser to communicate with service agents for a particular business or organization. Included as part of the system is a system user interface through which system users may connect over the Internet and view a number of options for establishing communications according to a selected mode. Once a mode is selected, the user will be connected to an agent through the selected mode. Also included are various displays presentable to a service agent, one of which allows the service agent to manually select a particular status which the system will then employ when routing incoming connections from system users. Further, the system is further configured to compile information about the various service agents such that a current state of agent availability may be viewed as well as performance information for each agent.

Beck, et al. discloses a multi-media telecommunications center which system users may access over the Internet. Through various displays presented to system users, various options may be selected depending on whether the user is a new customer or an existing customer. Further, displays are presented for automated product ordering as well as establishment of a line of communications with a customer service agent.

Roberts, et al. discloses a call center system which allows a representative and user to jointly browse Internet content while simultaneously conducting a voice conversation. Both parties simultaneously connect with a central server where a user applet communicates state information

about the user's computer browser display or user view to the server. The state is stored on the server. The server then downloads a server applet to the browser of the other party updating that display such that both parties are viewing the same html document. The user applet periodically polls the server to detect any changes initiated by either party.

The applicant has amended Claims 1 and 15 to now include the interactive screen display presentable and employable by a service agent to amend status of information, as well as at least one other display generated by the system for compiling and presenting agent status information. Specifically, Claim 1 has been amended to now describe an agent interface which includes a number of interactive buttons provide the capability for an agent to amend their status. The central processor is then further configured such that based on selections made by agents, a listing may then be compiled which is further employable when establishing connections to agents as well as providing a status display.

Claim 15 has been amended to now specifically describe the presentation of the interactive screen display to an agent for manually changing status information. Other added steps include receiving the status information and changing the status accordingly, as well as compiling the status information and presenting on a display.

As part of the amended claims described above, Claims 9, 12, and 22 have been deleted, and their limitations have been incorporated into the base claims. The applicant's invention is not made obvious by Beck, et al. or Roberts, et al., either alone or in combination, because neither of these references teaches or suggest the agent status and monitoring capabilities disclosed in the applicant's invention. Particularly, the applicant's invention discloses a screen display (please see Fig. 8) through which an agent enters their own status in the computer system. Based on this entered status information, the system may then generate a clear picture of which sales agents are available, which

are unavailable due to receiving calls, which agents are temporarily unavailable, and which ones have logged out for the day.

The Examiner has noted that in Roberts, et al. (Column 5, Lines 20-36) that once a call request from a user computer is placed in a queue, certain attributes can be collected by prompting the user or employing a user applet. In the nomenclature employed in Roberts, et al., a user computer is an incoming caller (e.g. a customer) wherein a second computer is one employed by a service agent. Roberts, et al. does not teach or suggest the presentation or use of any displays on the second computer which compile information or present status information for service agents. Further, the applicant has not been able to find any teaching or suggestion in this reference that any sort of monitoring of the second computer is performed.

In review of Beck, et al. the applicant has also not been able to find any discussion of the monitoring of the service agent computer such that the service agent may manually change status and that the central server further compiles this information for presentation. As such because neither of the references alone or in combination teaches the service agent monitoring functions taught in the applicant's invention, the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) is respectfully traversed.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

MARSH FISCHMANN & BREYFOGLE LLP

By: 
Kenneth J. Johnson, Esq.

Registration No. 36,834

Marsh Fischmann & Breyfogle LLP

3151 South Vaughn Way, Suite 411

Aurora, Colorado 80014

Telephone: (303) 338-0997

Facsimile: (303) 338-1514

Date: June 6, 2002

REDLINED CLAIMS

Please delete claims 9, 12, and 22.

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. A communications system comprising:

a user interface through which users may establish a connection with the system through use of a personal computer;

a agent interface through which agents may establish a connection with the system through a personal computer, wherein the agent interface includes a plurality of interactive buttons for manually indicating agent status;

a central processor which provides for establishing a line of communication between the users and the agents based on a mode of communication selected by the user, said central processor further including an agent status module which is configured to compile and present on an interface the agent status information for a plurality of the agents connected to the central processor;

a user memory which includes personal information for the user that have established a line of communication, wherein the central processor retrieves the user information when a connection is detected, and said user information is presented to the agent with which a line of communication has been established; and

a queue within which connections to the user may be directed when a first predetermined condition is detected by the processor, and which may be connected with an agent when a second predetermined condition is met.

10. The system of claim 1 [9] wherein performance information may be accessed and viewed through use of the agent monitoring module.

13. The system of claim 1 [12] wherein the status includes at least one of: agents currently active, identification information for connections in the queue, change of agent status.

15. A method of providing communications computer users comprising the steps of:
detecting a connection established by at least one user through a user interface;
displaying a first interactive screen graphic to the at least one user, wherein the interactive display graphic includes selections as to a desired mode of communication and provides for entry of selected information;

based on the selected information entered, retrieving from a memory personal information relating to the at least one user;

presenting an interactive screen display to at least one of the agents through which status information for the the at least one agent may be entered;

receiving change in status information from one of the agents, and changing the status of the agent accordingly

performing a search to determine if an agent is available to establish a connection with the at least one user;

if an agent is available, providing the personal information to the agent through a second screen display and establishing the connection between the user and the agent according to the mode of communication chosen by the at least one user; [and]

if an agent is unavailable, placing the at least on user's connection in a queue until one of the agents becomes available, wherein a connection is established between the user and the agent according to the mode of communication chosen by the at least one user; and

compiling the agent status information and compiling for view in a display.